

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 44

**Introduced by Assembly Member Hill
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Huffman and Nava)**

June 14, 2010

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 44—Relative to marine mammal conservation.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 44, as introduced, Hill. Commercial whaling: moratoriums

This measure would request that the President and the Congress of the United States provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks. This measure would memorialize the Legislature's opposition to the International Whaling Commission's proposal to lift the current moratorium on commercial whaling, which would legalize commercial whaling, leave enforcement of new whaling quotas to nations that have been violating the current moratorium, and allow the resumption of whale hunting in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Whales are evolutionarily complex, highly
- 2 intelligent, and extremely important for the health and viability of
- 3 ocean ecosystems; and
- 4 WHEREAS, In 1982, the International Whaling Commission
- 5 voted to implement a pause on commercial whaling beginning in
- 6 1986 in order to allow significantly depleted whale stocks to
- 7 recover and quotas on whales were set to zero; and
- 8 WHEREAS, On April 15, 2010, the United States announced
- 9 its intention to broker an agreement that would allow commercial

1 whale hunting for the first time since the moratorium was enacted
2 in 1986; and

3 WHEREAS, California is a coastal state dedicated to the
4 protection of our marine mammal populations, fisheries, and ocean
5 resources; and

6 WHEREAS, California's ocean waters support several species
7 of whales, including blue whales, gray whales, pilot whales, fin
8 whales, humpbacks, and orcas, all of which have special biological,
9 ecological, aesthetic, cultural, political, and symbolic qualities and
10 are particularly sensitive to the threats of whale hunting; and

11 WHEREAS, The protection of whales is of the utmost
12 importance to Californians and our state's coastal and
13 ocean-dependent industries, including tourism; and

14 WHEREAS, Whaling, pollution, and climate change threaten
15 these peaceful creatures; and

16 WHEREAS, Whaling has decimated these once abundant
17 species, including the blue whale, which has gone from a
18 population of several hundred thousand to near extinction and only
19 an estimated 5,000 to 12,000 blue whales remain throughout the
20 world; and

21 WHEREAS, The whaling moratorium has staved off extinction,
22 but must remain in place to support a population of many different
23 species of whales that continue to struggle; and

24 WHEREAS, Lifting the moratorium could result in significant,
25 irreversible, and harmful consequences to whale populations; and

26 WHEREAS, California has led the way in marine responsibility
27 and in 2008, the Legislature passed Assembly Joint Resolution
28 49, which calls on the National Marine Fisheries Service to
29 undertake an immediate and comprehensive assessment of the
30 California gray whale to determine if the gray whale should be
31 added to the endangered species list; and

32 WHEREAS, Legalizing commercial whaling, which would
33 decimate whale stocks, is contrary to our state's goal of protecting
34 our marine mammal populations, fisheries, and ocean resources;
35 now, therefore, be it

36 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
37 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California
38 respectfully requests that the President and the Congress of the
39 United States do everything in their power to provide for the proper
40 conservation of whale stocks; and be it further

1 *Resolved*, That the Legislature of the State of California
2 respectfully opposes the International Whaling Commission's
3 proposal to lift the whaling moratorium, which would legalize
4 commercial whaling, leave enforcement of new whaling quotas
5 to nations that have been violating the current moratorium, and
6 allow whale hunting in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary; and
7 be it further

8 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
9 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
10 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
11 Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and
12 Representative from California in the Congress of the United
13 States.